

Message Text

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71

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1793

SECDEF WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 8336

FOR T-MAW AND JORDAN, ARA - SHLAUDEMAN, S/P CAPT. PATTON
SECDEF FOR MR. MCAULIFFE, LT.GEN. FISH, GEN. CAVAZOS
FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, PINT, PE

SUBJECT: THE F-8 VS. THE SU-22

REF: (A) LIMA 8314

(B) CHMAAG PERU 142200Z JULY 76

(C) CHMAAG PERU 252038Z AUG 76

(D) SECDEF 7052

1. BECAUSE OF OUR INABILITY TO COMPETE WITH THE SU-22 WITH
A COMPARABLE WEAPONS SYTEM OR ON SIMILAR FINANCIAL TERMS, OUR
CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES HAS BEEN DESULTORY. WE
HAVE AS OF TODAY OFFERED PERU NO LOA ON ANY AIRCRAFT IN RESPONSE
TO ITS JANUARY REQUEST.

2. YET AS I NOTED IN REF A TODAY, FOR US TO CONTINUE TO APPEAR
TOTALLY UNRESPONSIVE TO GOP INTERESTS IN PAF MODERNIZATION FORE-
CLOSES WHATEVER CHANCE MAY REMAIN OF FORESTALLING A SU-22
PURCHASE.

3. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE INDICATIONS THAT TOP GOP LEADERSHIP AND
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MANY OFFICERS MAY BE WILLING TO CONSIDER A PLANE THAT IS LESS THAN FULLY COMPETITIVE WITH THE SU-22, BUT WHICH MEETS BASIC DESIRE OF THE PAF AND THE GOP FOR REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT AT MODERATE COST.

4. THE F-8 IS SUCH AN AIRCRAFT. I BELIEVE THAT A USG OFFER TO SELL IT TO PERU OFFERS OUR MOST FEASIBLE CHANCE OF PREEMPTING A SU-22 PURCHASE, POSSIBLY EVEN A BETTER CHANCE THAN THE NEWER, MORE SOPHISTICATED AND EXPENSIVE A-4M.

5. IN ADDITION TO COST CONSIDERATIONS (F-8 \$25 MILLION VS. A-4M \$200 MILLION PLUS) SECOND-HAND F-8 CRUSADERS WOULD BE LESS OBJECTIONABLE THAN EITHER THE A-4 OR THE SU-22. THE F-8 ORIGINATED IN THE

MID-1950S AS A FLEET DEFENSE INTERCEPTOR AND HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEEN MODIFIED TO GIVE IT A LIMITED AIR-TO-GROUND OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY.

6. AS INDICATED IN REFS B AND C, THE LTV PRESENTATION MADE IN JULY ON THE F-8 MEETS PAF AVAILABILITY REQUIREMENTS IN THAT TRAINING CAN COMMENCE TWO MONTHS FROM GO-AHEAD WITH DELIVERY OF FIRST TWO AIRCRAFT TO PERU WITHIN SIX MONTHS AND ALL 25 DELIVERED WITHIN ONE YEAR.

7. WE BELIEVE MOST POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES OF AN F-8 SALE CAN BE MET. THE F-8 IS OBVIOUSLY LESS MODERN AND OFFENSIVE THAN THE SU-22, AND THIS DOES NOT REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT TO "COMPETE" IN ANY SENSE OTHER THAN RESPONSIVENESS TO LEGITIMATE MODERNIZATION NEEDS. PERU'S NEIGHBORS WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A SALE WITH LESS APPREHENSION NOW THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF THE SOVIET ALTERNATIVE. FINALLY, BECAUSE OF LIMITED ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY (LACK OF PILOTS AND LIMITED FINANCING) AND HEIGHTENED POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS, WE BELIEVE IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE GOP WOULD ACCEPT THE F-8 AND STILL BUY THE SU-22.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: (A) THAT DOD TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO PROVIDE NECESSARY PRICE AND AVAILABILITY FOR F-8 TO BE INCLUDED IN POSSIBLE LOA. (B) THAT YOY CONSIDER APPRISING AIR MINISTER POGGI TOMORROW OF USG WILLINGNESS TO ISSUE LOA TO PERU, OR THAT, ALTERNATIVELY, UNDER SECRETARY MAW HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE SUCH AN APPROACH TO THE GOP HERE.

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9. IF MADE, THIS RESPONSE MAY BE TOO LITTLE TOO LATE. BUT I BELIEVE IT IS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST TO BE ON RECORD AS HAVING MADE A USG OFFER -- REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE SU-22 DEAL CAN BE FORESTALLED.
DEAN

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